

wars. General James A. Garfield, later President of the United States, had this to say at a memorial to the dead in Arlington Cemetery:

"If silence is golden," he said, "it must be here beside the graves of 15,000 men whose lives were more significant than speech and whose death was a poem the music of which can never be sung."

In these remarks, he was echoing an even greater and more moving speech — by President Lincoln when the battlefield at Gettysburg was dedicated as a national cemetery. "But in a larger sense," said President Lincoln, "we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow the ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here."

We cannot, then, do appropriate honor to these brave men with words alone, regardless of the gifts we may possess. We can, as we are doing here today, honor them with parades and stirring ceremonies. We can decorate their graves with flowers, in reverent testimony that the ravages of time will not erase from our memories the sacrifices they made that our country might remain strong and free. But we can do much more than that if, by our own actions we strive to emulate their deeds of courage.

As we look around ourselves today, we are sharply conscious of the fact that the peace we enjoy today is a fragile and uneasy one. The threat of war — and a war more destructive than could have been dreamed of by those we honor — hovers over us constantly. This is a challenge that calls upon us to display as much courage as was displayed by the men who fought in the wars of the past. It is a stern reminder to all of us that we must be prepared to make the same commitments, the same sacrifices, if we expect to preserve the freedom their lives made possible for us. Let us act, then. And let us pray that the men of today, and the children of today who will be the men of tomorrow, will achieve a greater victory in their struggle with the greatest of all the enemies of mankind — war itself. Let us humbly petition our maker that there be no more bloodshed, no more maimed, no more dead over which to mourn, but only life and the strength to build a better nation and a better world. Let us pray for peace and work for peace.

So today, as we commemorate the services of those who fought in all of our wars, pray that all those working for a world without wars shall attain their goal. Pray that the ages to come shall not know